

H O T E L

H A R B O U R

V I E W

HOTEL HAKUBA View

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Art by Naoko Takiguchi

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HOTEL

STORY BY NATSUO SEKIKAWA

HARBOUR

ART BY JIROH TANIGUCHI

VIEW

VIZ SPECTRUM EDITIONS

Death checks
into the Hotel Harbour View 94
by Fred Burke

Episode 1

HOTEL HARBOUR VIEW



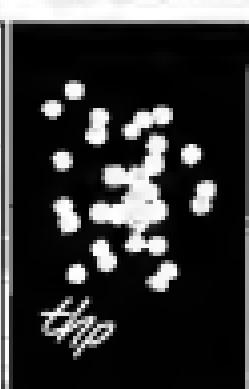
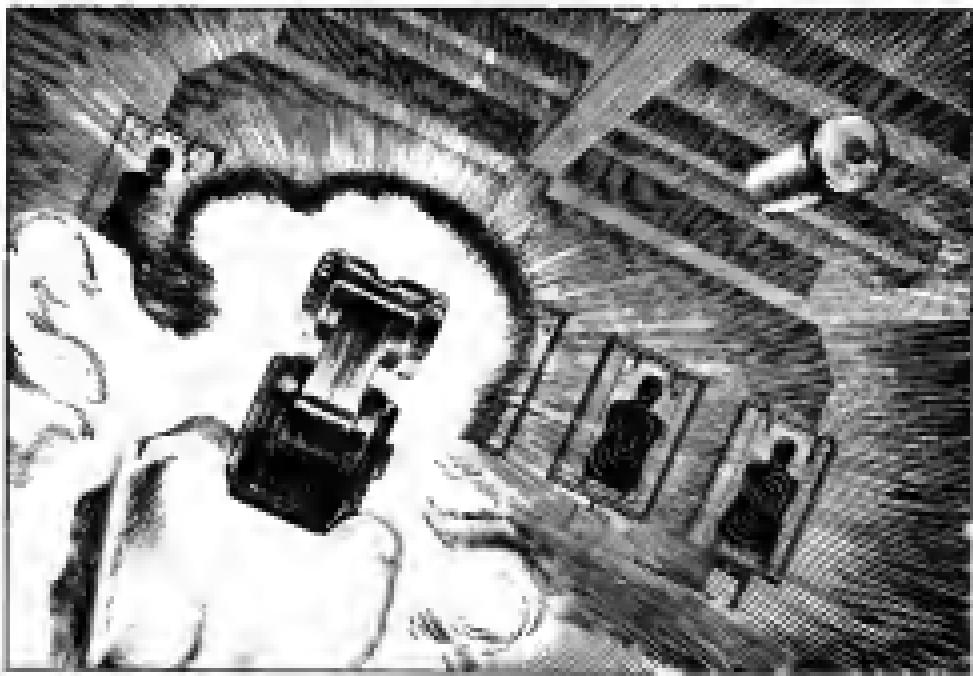
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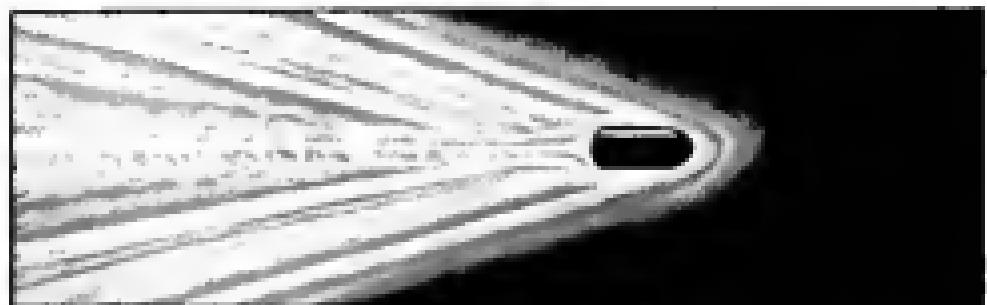
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thp

thp

9







TAKE
A
LOOK.

OVER
FIVE MILLION
PEOPLE
IN
THAT ONE
LITTLE
SPOT.

NO SMOKING
FASTEN SEAT BELT

MORE NEON
SIGNS
ON JUST THE
VICTORIA
SIDE OF
HONG KONG
THAN IN
ALL
SOUTHEAST
ASIA

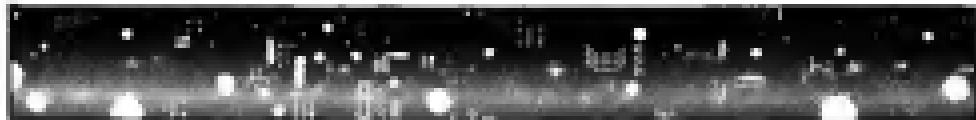
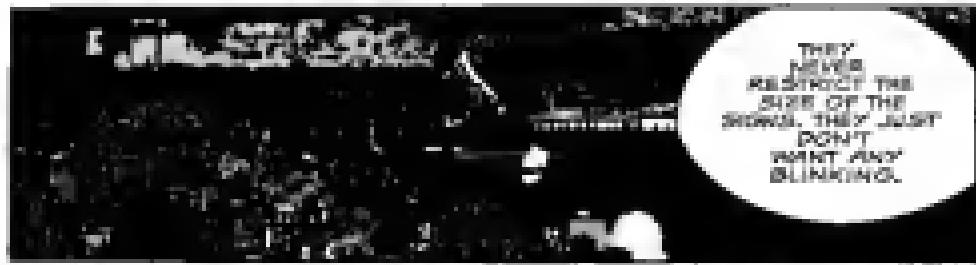


SSSSHHHHHH



SHE...
IN HONG
KONG,
MONKEY
IS THE
ROOT
OF ALL
EVIL





THE
COUNTRY'S
JUST
A STRIP
OF
DIRT IN
THE SEA.

SO WHAT
BROUGHT
YOU TO
HONG
KONG
FOR
BUSINESS
OR
PLEASURE?

ONE
PIECE OF
BLINKING
NEON...
AND WE
ALL
FLICKER OUT
LIKE
A LIGHT.

I'M...
A
TOUR
IST.

WHERE
ARE
YOU
FROM?

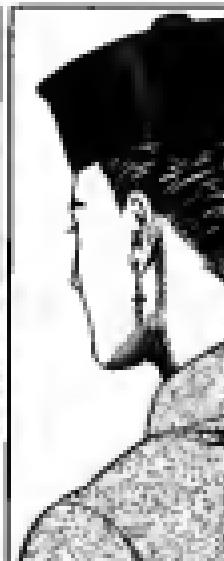
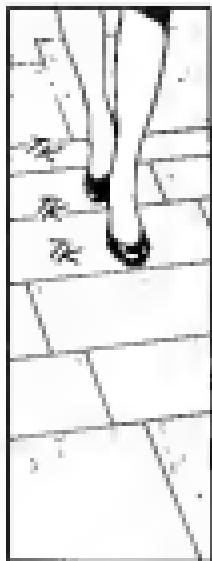
I'M
FROM
P.C.
WITH
SILVA.

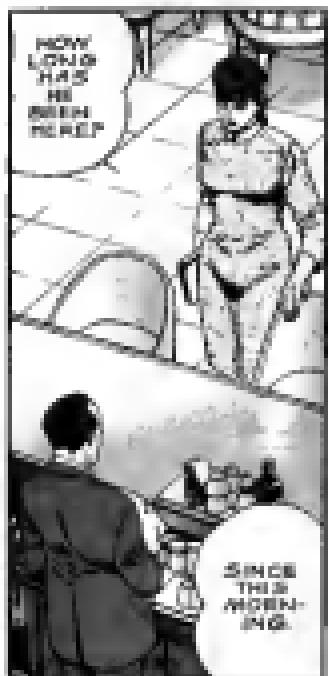
AND
YOU'RE...
TOOKIN'
HONG
KONG?

CALI-
FORNIA
SAN
JOSE.









AND WHAT IS HE DOING?



DAY AFTER DAY, ONLY WAITING.



TWENTY YEARS
AND THEY CAME,
MORNING AND
NIGHT, BEAUTIFUL
WOMEN...
WHITE AND
EURASIAN...

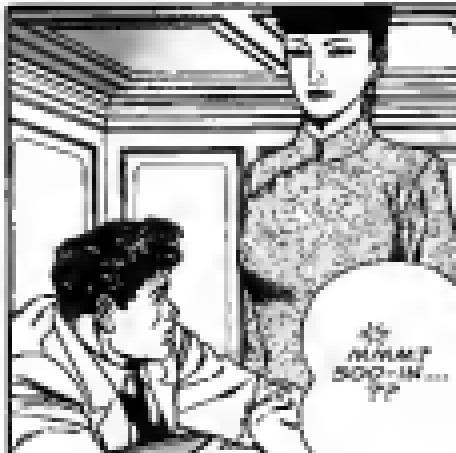
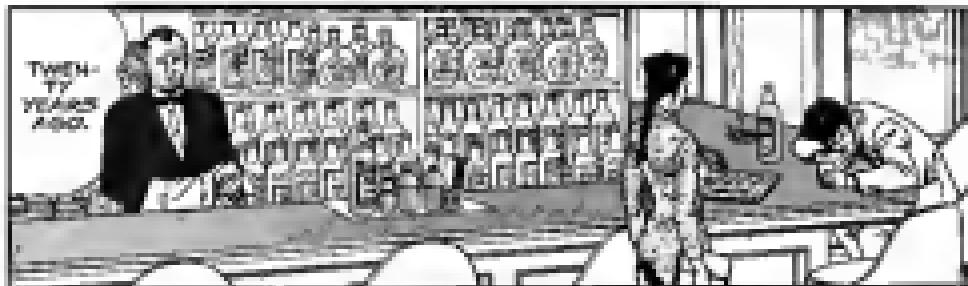


ONCE SHIRLEY
MACLAINE STRUCK
DINE ON OUR
SHIRLEY SMIZZLES.
ON PRESENTING HER
BILL I SAID...

MISS
MAC-
LAINE..."

"MISS
MACLAINE,"
I SAID.
"I HAVE
INCLUDED THE
COST OF THE
SMIZZLE STICK
IN YOUR
HAMBURG ON
THIS BILL.
WILL
THAT BE
SATISFACTORY?"

TWEN-
TY
YEARS
AGO.



AT
MINIMUM
500-IN...
TP

RANDY
MEET-
ING YOU
HERO.

I
LOVE
IT
HERE.

THEY
OUGHTA PUT
A PLAQUE
ON
THE BAR...
RIGHT
HERE...
WITH MY
NAME
ON IT.

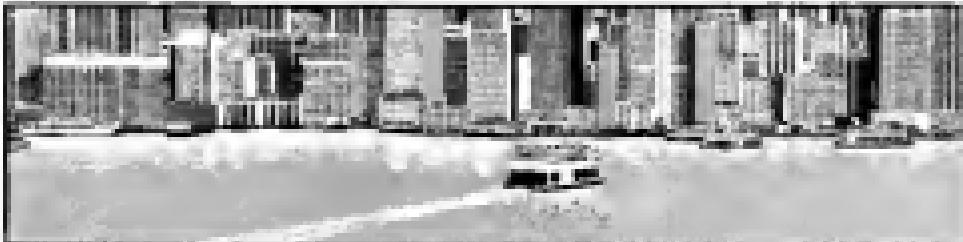
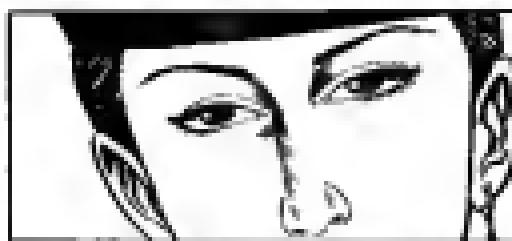
SHALL
WE GO
UP?

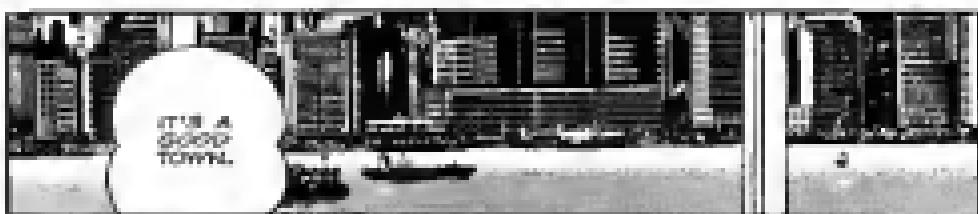
APPLE'S CHINA
STATES

DO
YOU
FEEL
IN
THE
MOOD?

DON
IN
THE
MOOD.

ALWAYS
IN
THE
MOOD...
FOR
DEGRADATION.







WHY
IS IT
ME AGAIN
TODAY?



THESE
ARE
SO
MANY
YOUNGER
GIRLS.

VIRGINIA
WHO'VE
JUST
ESCAPED
THE
MAINLAND.



HONG
KONG AND
ME
WE'RE IN
OUR
TWILIGHTS.
YOU'RE
JUST
RIGHT.

KCHK



IF YOU
DON'T
MIND...
LEAVE
YOUR
ASS.











IN THE
OLD DAYS...
WHEN
THE
HEAT WAS
ON
IN JAPAN...

...JAPAN
NEVER
GAINED
STEAM
POWER
BUT
HAD
HORSES.

I
HORSES.

I
SAW
ALL THOSE
OLD
ISHIMAKA
AND KOBAYASHI
MOVIES.

THE MOVIES
ALL START
WITH THEM
RETURN TO
JAPAN.

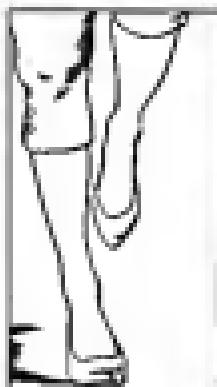
YEAR.

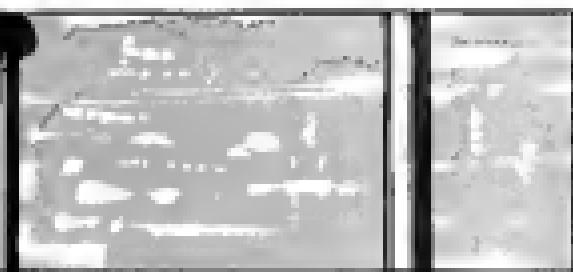
THIS
STORY'S
DIFFER-
ENT. IT
ENDS
BEFORE
THAT.

WHAT
WILL
YOU
DO
WITH
THE
FIG-
TURES?

TONIGHT
I'LL LOOK
AT THEM...
ALONE.

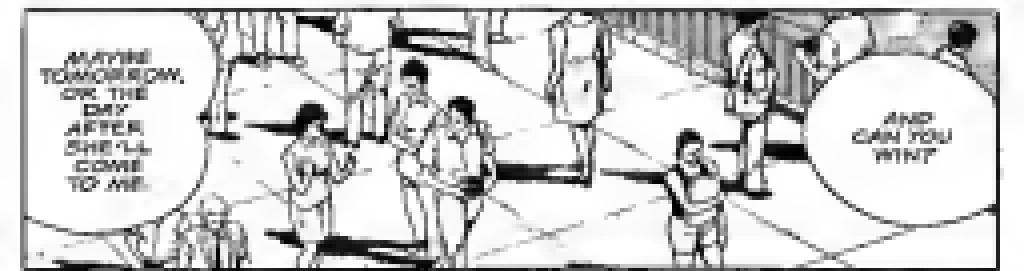
THEM
I'LL
BURN
THEM.







THEN YOU
WON'T
FIGHT
ME, HUH?



ANYTIME
TOMORROW,
OR THE
DAY
AFTER
SHE'LL
COME
TO ME.

AND
CAN
YOU
WAIT?



I
DON'T
KNOW,
NOT
TILL I
TRY.



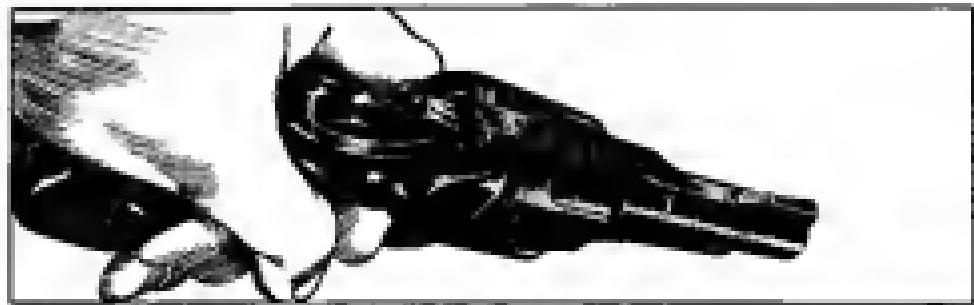
PEEPEE

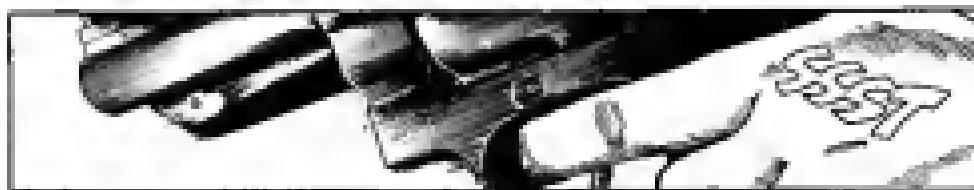


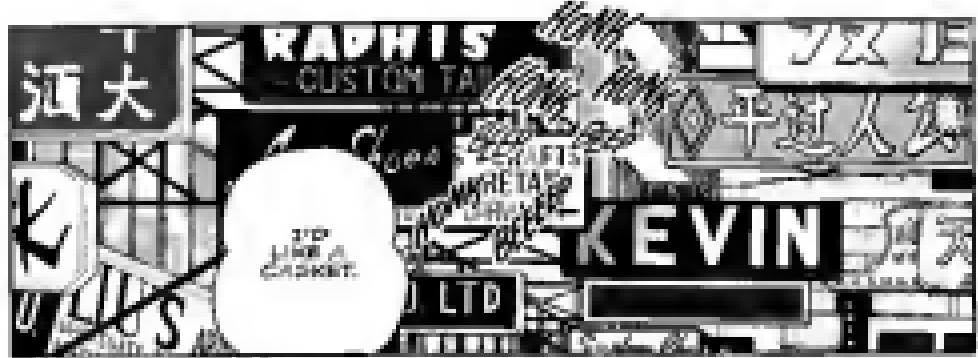
HOW ABOUT
GOING
DOWN TO
ABERDEEN
FOR DINNER?
AT THE
FLOATING
RESTAURANT.

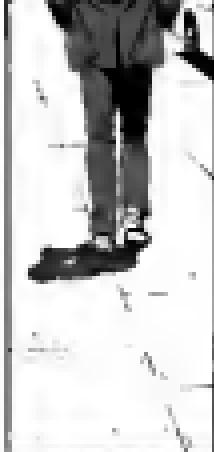


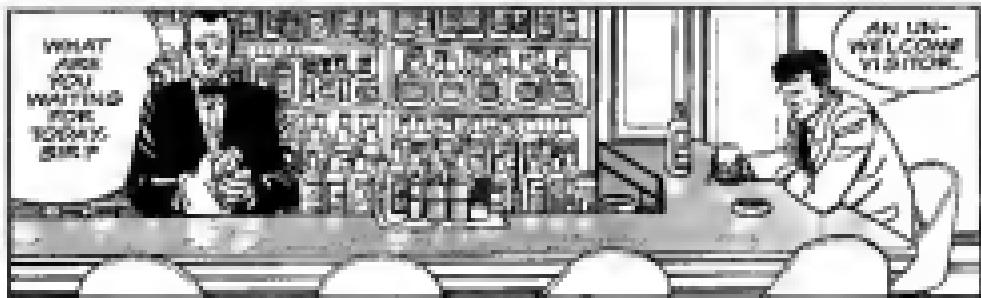
GOOD
IDEA. I
SHOULD
GO
OUT IN
STYLE.







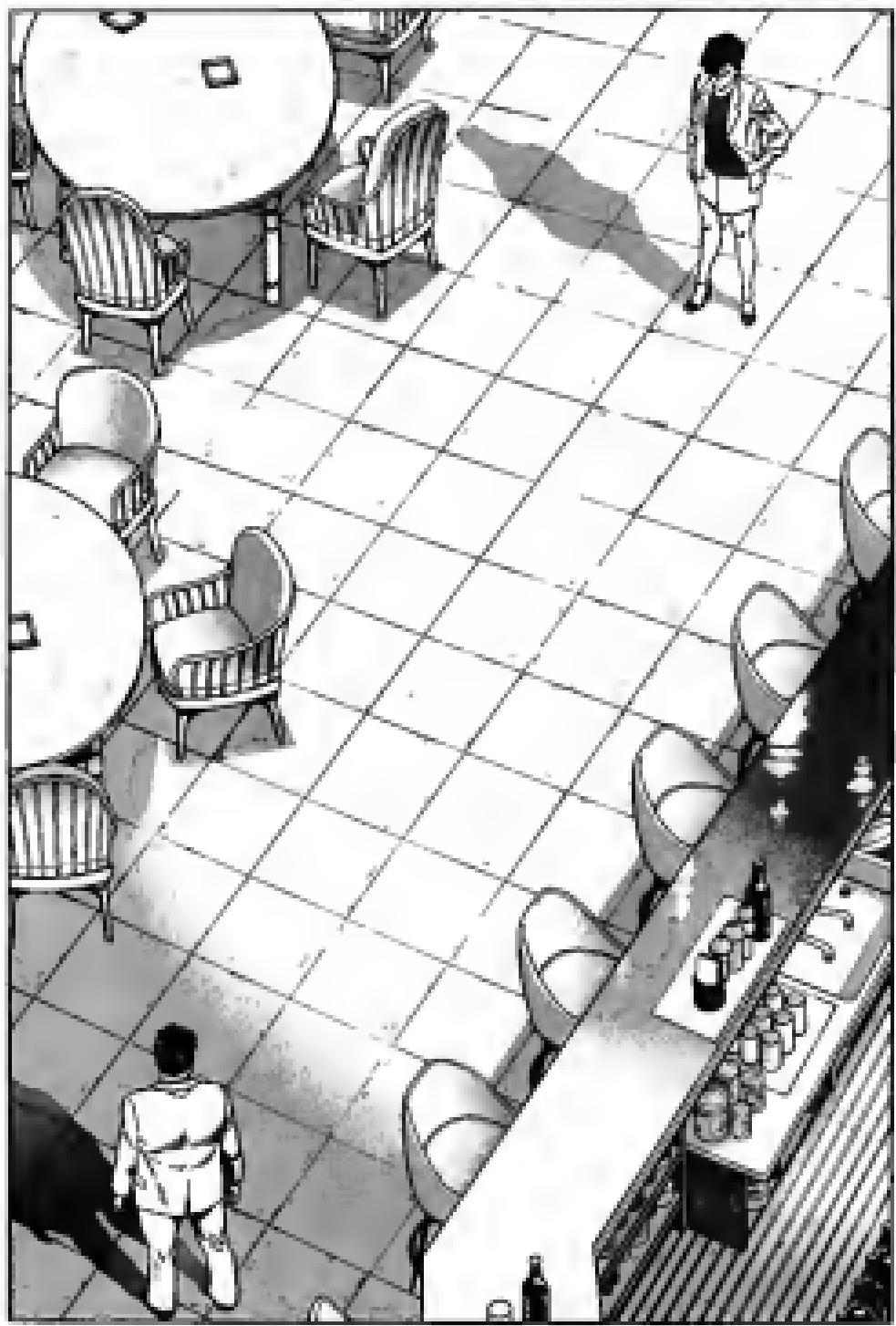


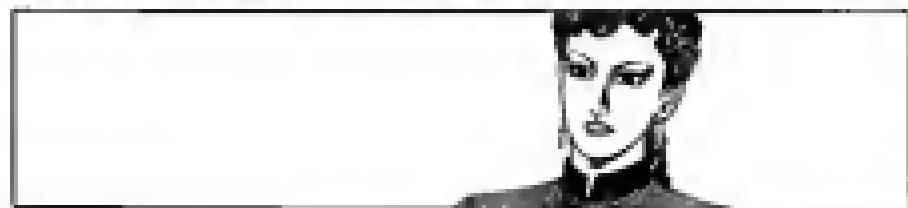




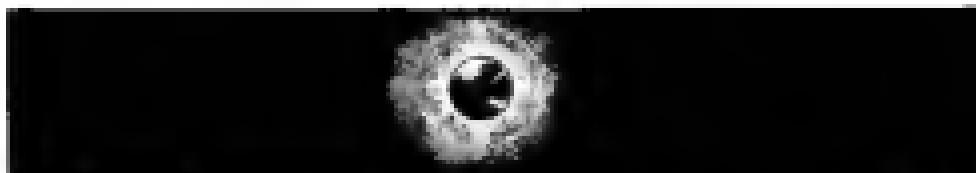








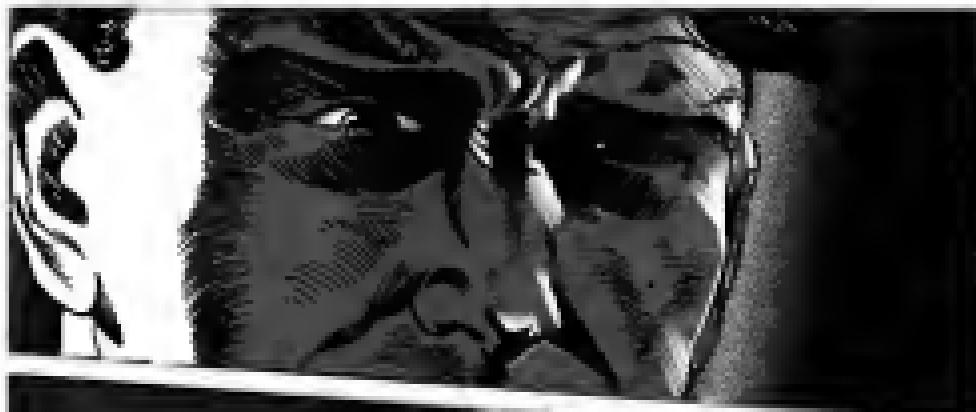
THHHHHHHHH

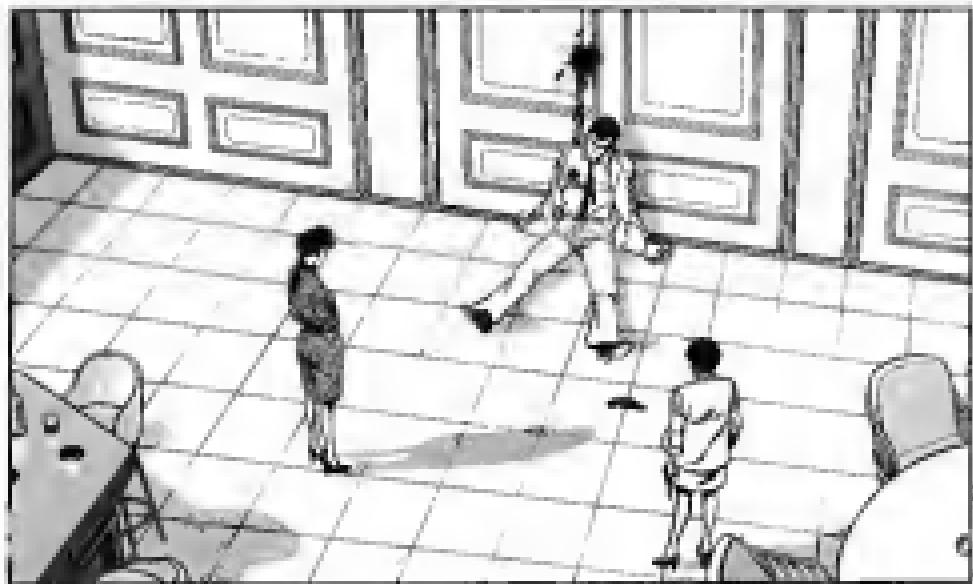






BLUPP

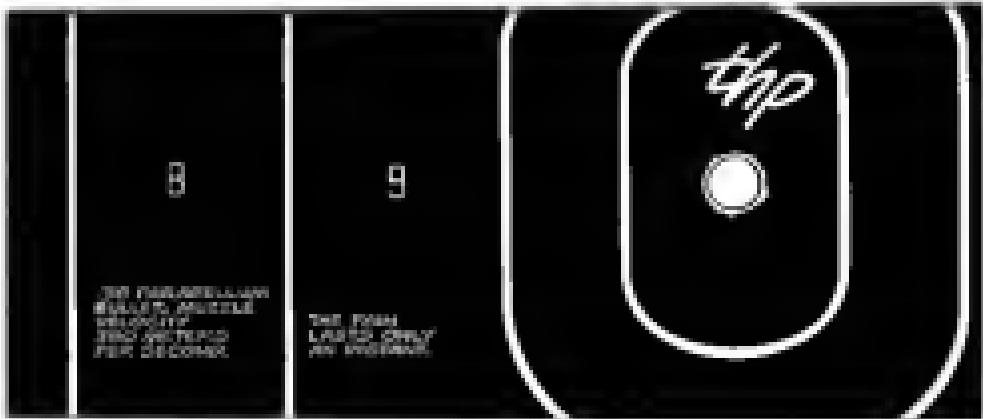














H O T E L

STORY BY NATSUO BEKIKAWA

H A R B O U R

ART BY JIJI OR TANAKA

V I E W

VIZ SPECTRUM EDITIONS

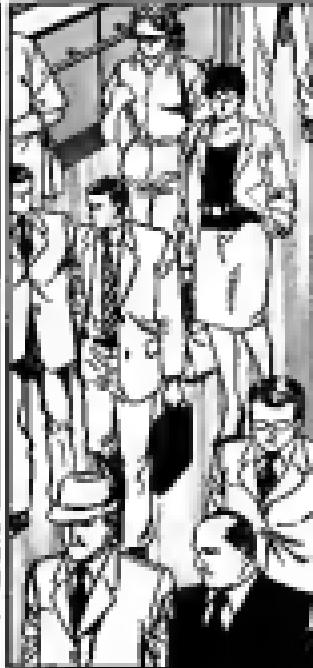
Episode 2
BRIEF ENCOUNTER

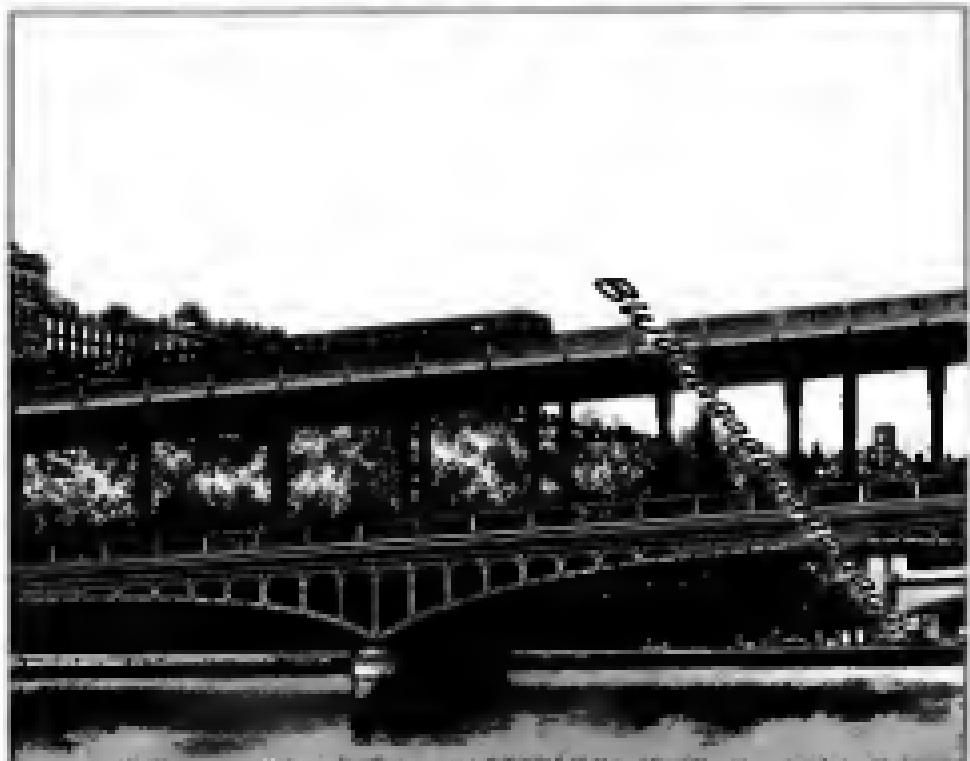
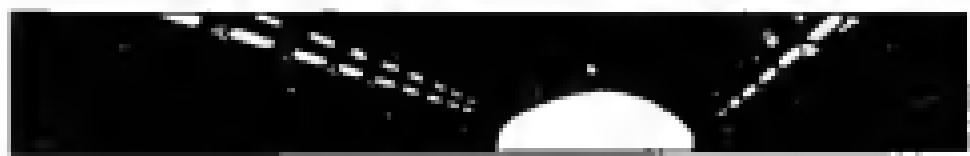
ACT ONE



AIRPORT DRAWINGS BY GREGORY MARCUS, MICHIGAN STATE, 21 MAY.

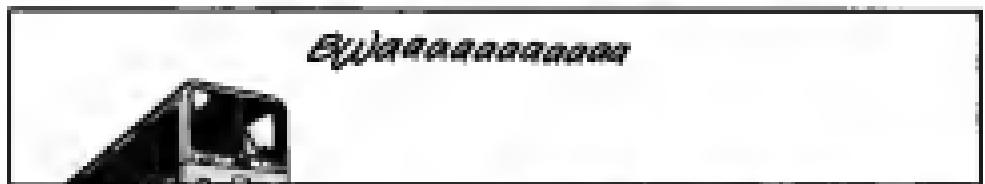


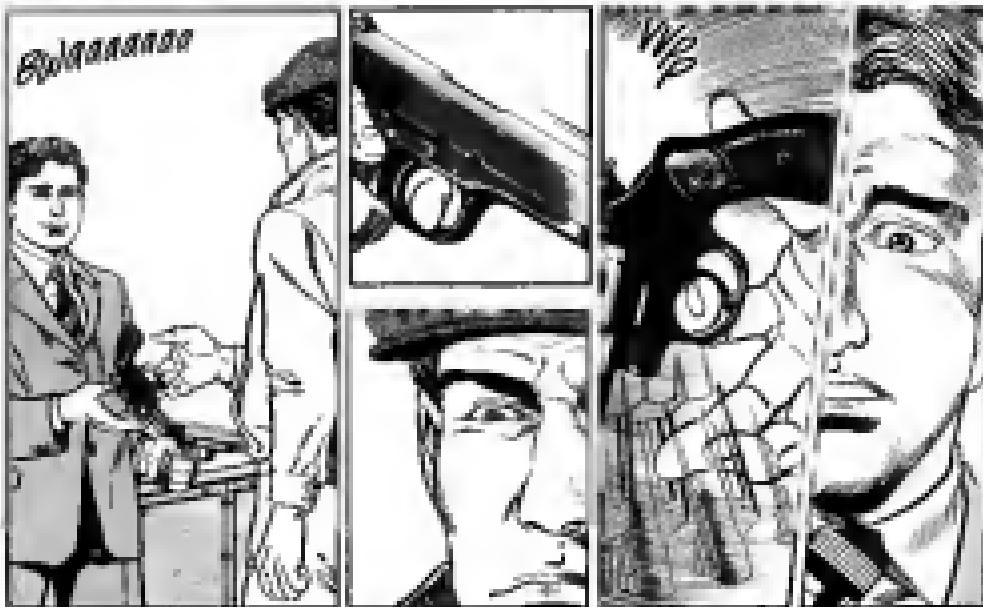
















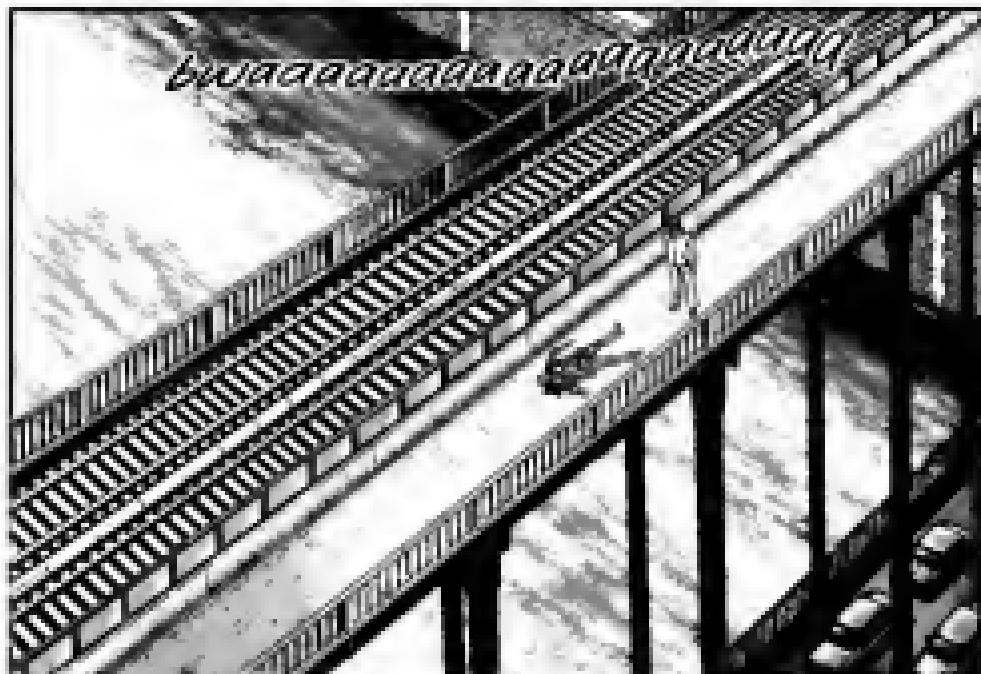
BWoo

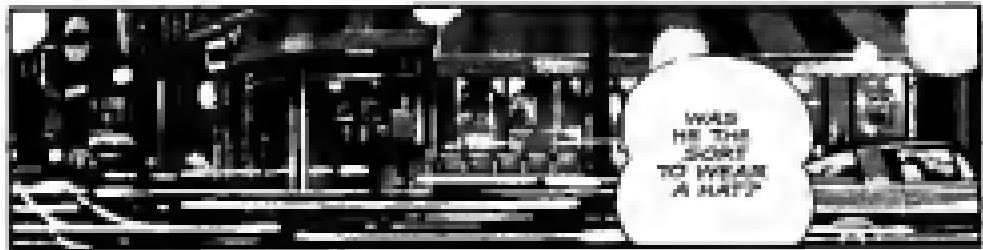




aaaaaaa







LAST
WEEK A
MAN NAMED
PASCAL
WAS
KILLED.

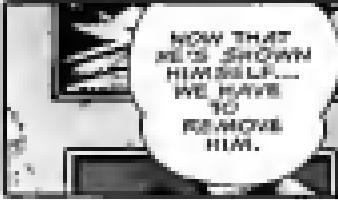
BY
HIM
?



I WONDER
HOW LONG
HE'S BEEN
BACK IN PARIS.
HE SPENT SO
LONG IN
HONDURAS... IN
MADAGASCAR—
DJIBOUTI...



HE WAS
THE SOCIET
WHO KEPT A
PARIS
METRO
TICKET IN HIS
POCKET...
WHEREVER
HE WENT.



NOW THAT
HE'S SHOWN
HIMSELF...
WE HAVE
TO
REMOVE
HIM.



WHY?



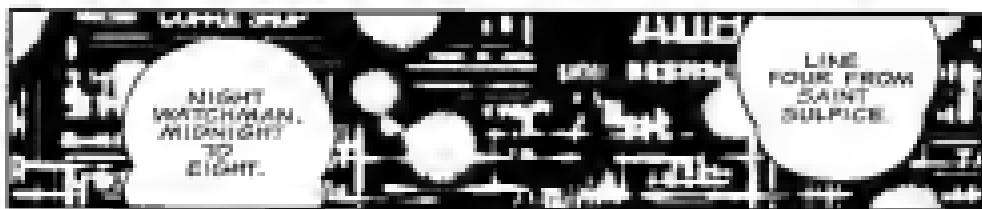
PASCAL
VOLUNTEERED,
HE WAS A
PROGRAMMING
YOUNG
THING.

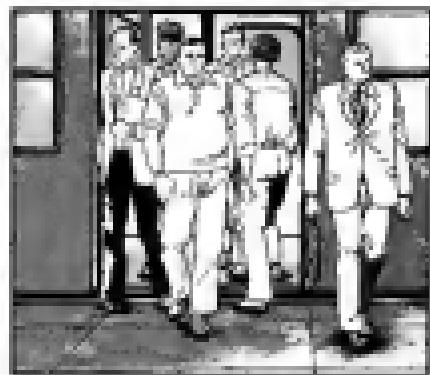


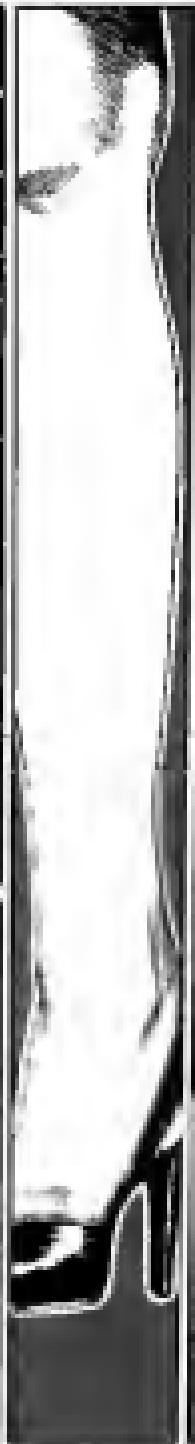
THOUGHT HE
WAS GOING
TO KILL A
LEADER OR
NO DOUBT
AND MAKE
HIS OWN
LEADER.

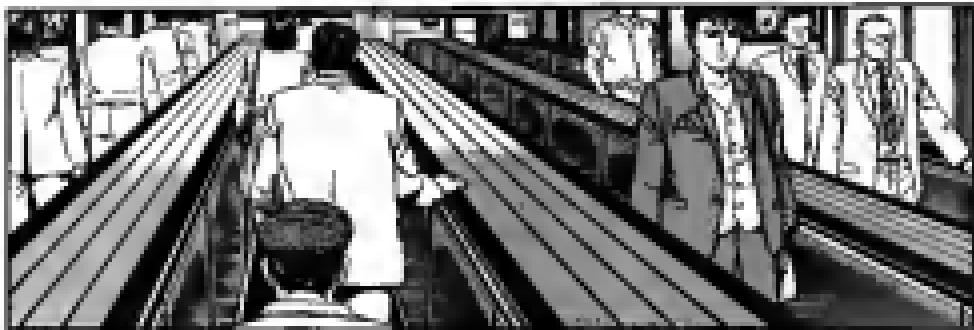
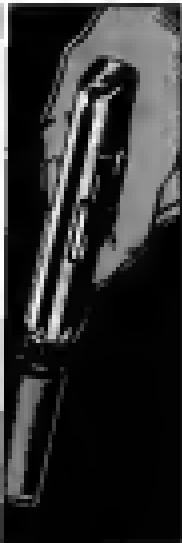
WHY?



















NAAAAGGGGG



HE'S
PROBABLY
JUST AS
GOOD
TODAY

YEAH
PROBABLY

HE
KNEW
WHAT HE
WAS
DOING,
COMING
BACK TO
PARADISE

KNOWING
HE'D BE
KILLED
SOONER OR
LATER...BUT
THAT IT
WOULDN'T
BE EASY

YOU
UNDER-
STAND
HIM
THAT WELLIE

WELL, HE
IS AN
OLD
FRIEND,
AFTER
ALL

SAYONARA,
YOU
SAID?

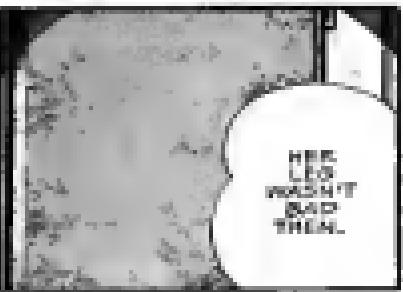
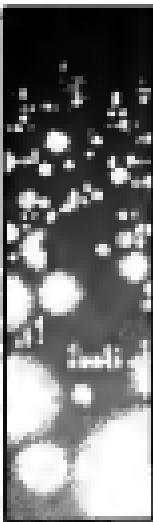
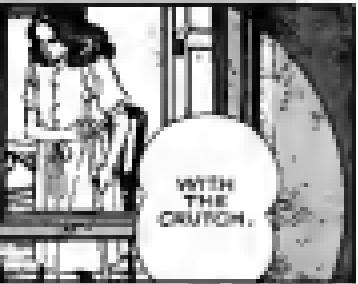
MANILA...



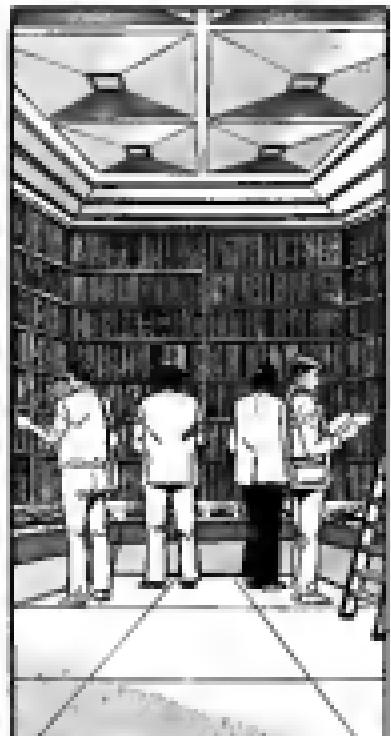
Episode 2
BRIEF ENCOUNTER

ACT TWO

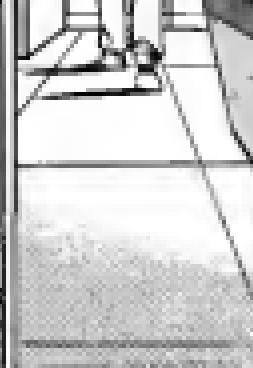


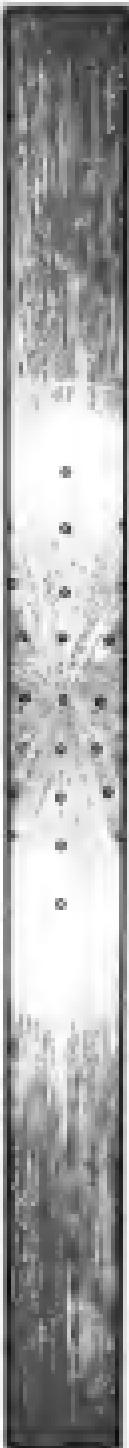


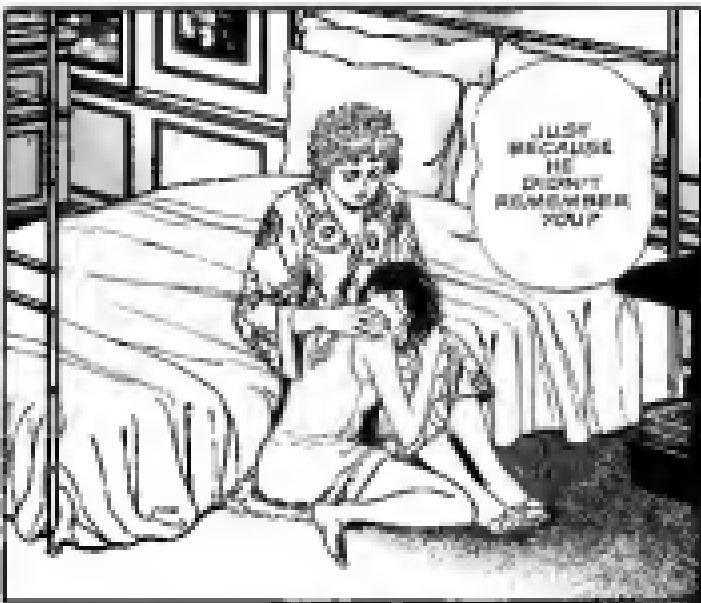












WOMEN PUT THEIR
BABIES ENCOUNTERS
IN BOXES AND TIE
THEM WITH
RIBBONS...

HE TOOK THE
AMBACIES
OVER
LIKE USED
MATCHES.

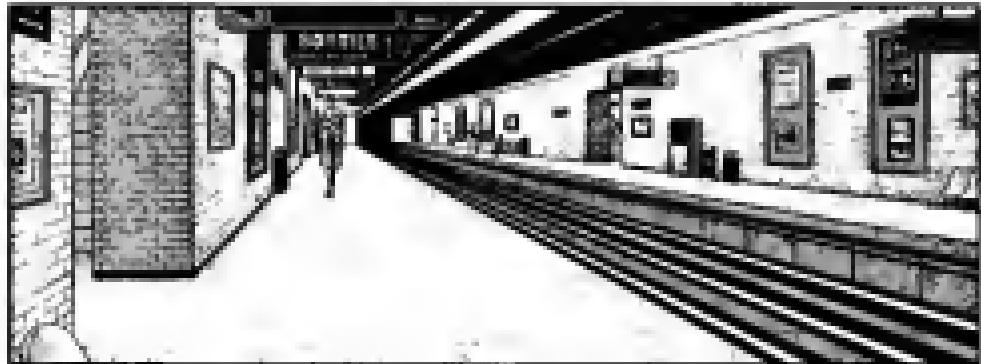
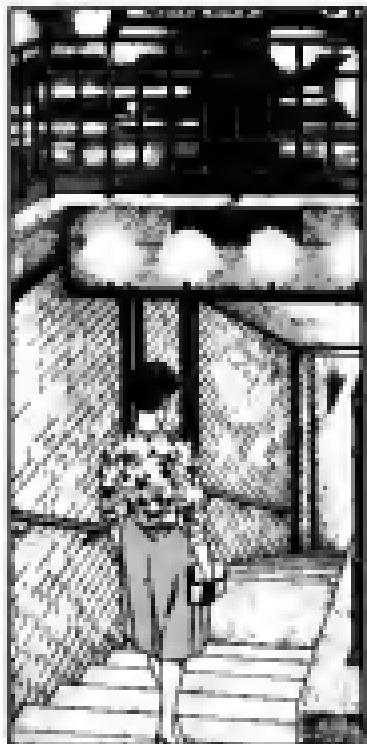
THERE'S
NOTHING
TO BE
DONE...

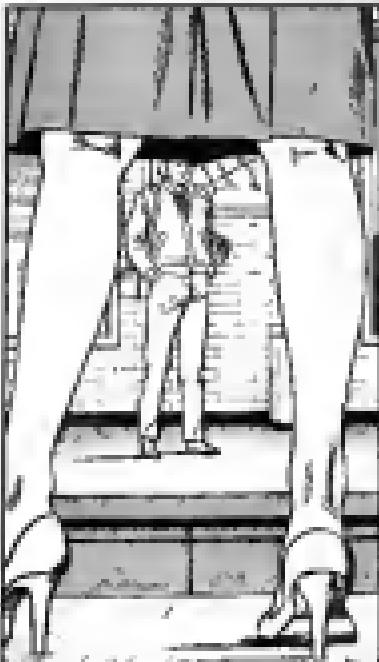
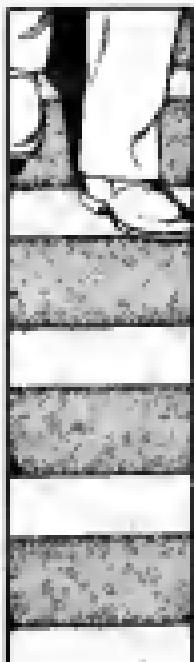


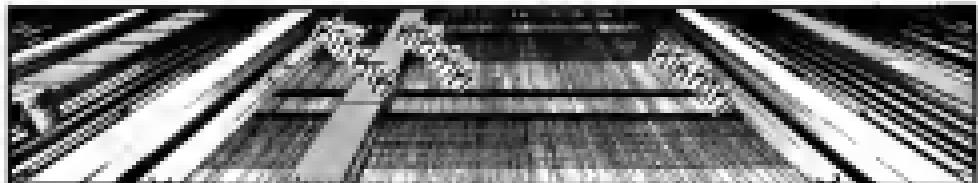
HE WAS
MORE THAN
A BRIEF
ENCOUNTER.
HE WAS
THE ONE...

WHO
TAUGHT
ME TO
KILL...

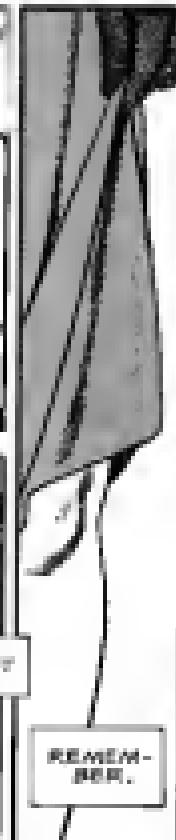
















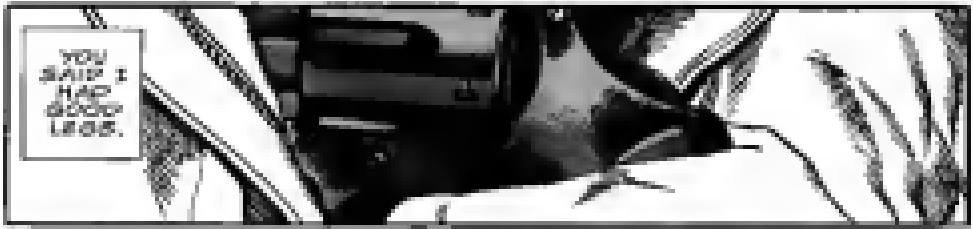
IT
WOULD
BE
SUMMER
IN
MANILA.



DO
YOU
REMEM-
BER
MANILA?



LOOK
AT MY
LEGS.



YOU
SAID I
HAD
GOOD
LEGS.



AT THE
HOTEL ON
THE BEACH
IN PUERTO
AZUL.





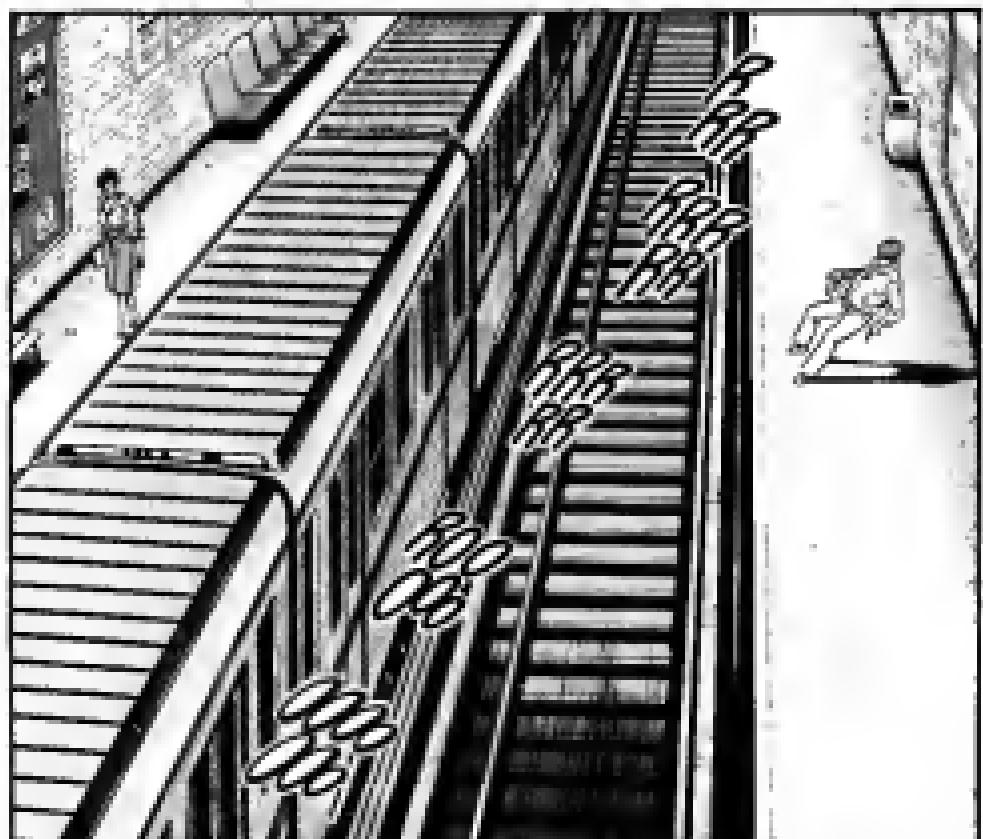
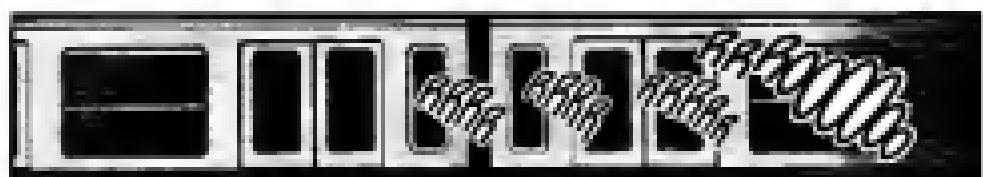


NEVER
FORGOT



THAT
YOU
WERE
IN
LOVE.







REMEMBER.





DEATH CHECKS IN TO THE HOTEL HARBOUR VIEW

By Fred Burke

In October, Death checks in to the Hotel Harbour View as Vicki's unique Spectrum line presents its second title, another finely cut of the manga mainstream and into the depths and breadth of Japanese storytelling. This strangely compelling album of two stories mean sex and death in intriguing proportions—and leaves us wondering at the similarities between prostitutes and assassins, men and paraded women.

Hotel Harbour View is writer Naotoshi Sôkôsaku and artist Jûchirô Taniguchi's spirited homage to the hard-boiled detective fiction and film noir of the late forties and fifties, a time when American popular culture took a turn toward the dark, a time when the dirty underbelly of our society gave inspiration to some of the hardest working stylists in fiction and film. Japan followed suit in the nineties with yakuza tales of intense gangster violence, and in France many filmmakers of the New Wave paid their respects to the growing international genre. Hotel Harbour View links its foundation firmly to this tradition.

From them, however, Sôkôsaku and Taniguchi build something more, a meditation on death that seems, on the surface, to deal with style more than substance. After all, the female assassins of these stories make it clear that their services are available to anyone with the cash. For one of these women killing a man she once loved presents only minor emotional obstacles. Yet in each of these brief

tales we are forced to look carefully at a man's final moments, and in the end we are left wondering if anything can truly be more ominous a symbol of one's life than one's death.

In the title story, "Hotel Harbour View," we are drawn to the parallel between the protagonist's elaborate directions of a prostitute as he photographs her masturbating and his similar choreographing of his own demise sex and death, devoid of spontaneity, but acted through with a style unique to their creator. "Blood Encounter," the second story, takes us deeper into the psychology of our assassin, forced to kill not only a man she once had an affair with, but more importantly, the man who taught her how to shoot a gun. It is a difficult assignment for her to complete, but not at all for the remorseless one might believe.

And here is where Sôkôsaku can be justifiably proud of his achievement. Both of these stories tread on dangerous moral ground, both apparent, at first glance, to be ludicrously simplistic little small tales. But in the most eloquently simple terms, Sôkôsaku helps us understand why a man would want to engage his own assassination, how memory of a love long lost can pull the trigger on death's revolver.

Sôkôsaku's prose is stark, and on page after page of comic he allows the action to speak for itself. Hotel Harbour View is full of incredible sequences that rely on sequential art

ability to slow time to a virtual standstill—a state which would be boring if we weren't entranced by the odd ballet of bullet, assassin, and victim, the dance of death. Hotel Harbour View also serves up some more levities; Taniguchi helps us to revel in Hong Kong's night skyline and the Poco railway system. The alleys where in which we pass our days in green are due to his masterful remembrance about the good old days, a woman's deadly turn a side against her former employer. Death Sôkôsaku seems to say, has both its place and its time.

The tight-fisted control of pacing, the powerlessness of story, in so little, so accomplished, that we are pulled along without noticing it. In much the same way, Taniguchi's art work serves the story rather than grandstanding. Filled with the levels of depth and gray tones that have come to characterize "good" black and white manga art in the States, Taniguchi's art relies on a gritty crosshatching style to keep the intricate zip-zap patterns from becoming

ing "stark." It is a technique that works, in spades.

Hotel Harbour View is not for the casual reader. Its sexual content is matter of fact, and the book certainly focuses on the intricacies of death rather than heated light scenes. But there is more to the comic medium than just the action sequences and melodrama that seem to characterize so much of mainstream comics, both here and in Japan, and digging beneath the surface of Sôkôsaku and Taniguchi's work has its own rewards.

Fred Burke is a student of The Black Screen, *Edgar Allan Poe's* secret story into the crypt of death. His work for *Hi* includes contributions of *Yuraku*, *Fan of the March Rose*, *Beach*, and the current science fiction bestseller *2001: Eight*.



JIROH TANIGUCHI

Jiroh Taniguchi was born in 1947 in Tokyo, Japan. After his high school graduation, he became an assistant to a professional comic artist, Tokuo Matsukawa, in 1966. In 1974 he met Nobuo Matsubara and together they created *Unpunpun City* and *Shirokane*, two manga series that enjoyed a new style in Japanese comic storytelling. His other major works include *Trouble Is Big Business*, a hard-boiled detective comic with a touch of humor, and *The Age of Eccentric*. Part 1 of Part 2, a compilation of biographies of Japanese literary greats from the turn of the century. Both these stories were written by Matsukawa, though Taniguchi has written credits himself. *Home* is the story of a former expatriate married and born Russia and returning home. Alaska and Canada.

NATSUO SEKIKAWA

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